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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
Washington

OSD DECLASSIFICATION/RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS ON FILE

Apr 2 1951

Dear Senator McMahon:

I refer to your memorandum, 12 February 1951, in which request is made for certain information concerning our atomic weapons, our ability to deliver them, the selection of targets, our atomic missile development, and other details,

Most careful consideration has been given to a series of possible answers to the questions presented by you and, after consultation by the President with me and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it has been decided that there is no practicable way in which this type of information can be made available without serious risk to our national security.

No question as to the integrity of anyone concerned in this matter has arisen. The risk to our national security arises from the fact that answers to the questions propounded cannot be complete in themselves; that is they can serve only to develop further fields for examination. Thus the ultimate result could only be a complete briefing of our most secret war plans including all the information upon which they are based.

Those mentioned above are unanimously of the opinion that this type of information must be held secret by the President, in his capacity as Commander in Chief, and his immediate subordinates. I believe that when you consider this matter from this point of view you will understand our reticence and agree with the conclusions reached.

Faithfully yours,

/s/ G. C. Marshall

Honorable Brien McMahon
Chairman, Joint Committee on Atomic Energy
United States Senate.

C-O-P-Y

Review of this document by CIA has
determined that

☒ CIA has no objection to declass
if it contains information of CIA
interest that must remain
classified at TS S O
Authority: HR 70-2

☐ It contains nothing of CIA interest
Date 9 May 81 Reviewer 6514

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